

"Maybe if you work it right
the Mafioso will take care
of it."

"That idea would get a lot
of laughs downtown. I mean,
it was serious craziness like
a high speed parade only everyone
was afraid to open their mouth:
teeth would do a lot of damage
to a tongue rattling around
like that. The worst of it was,
I was hungover. That was one
headache I thought would never
go away."

-- Alan Catlin

Schenectady NY

WINNING

I just got an advertisement in the mail today,
How to be a winner. I don't even have to read,
just listen to these cassettes.
How did they find me out? Do they know
how badly I am doing? Do they keep computer records
of how many losing lottery tickets I buy,
how the good life is passing me by?
What did they do to find me out?
Am I part of a random sampling, end result
of a statistical analysis? Here's a loser,
send him all the junk on how to be a winner,
are there that many losers?
Am all I am an ink mark on the page
an electrical impulse held in suspended animation
a speck of blank type caught between the pages
of the deeds of trust, a birth certificate,
a death certificate? I no longer have any life.
My history is available to anyone
who has \$18 and access to a computer.
I've been guilty since grade school of
not trying hard enough to win. I don't care if I win.
Yet they come after me. Promises of winning
fill my mail. Look for meaningful work.
Be a winner every day every way.
Be productive, win, win, win
Luther and Calvin knock at my door
They are angry. Their anger burns
through me like a laser beam

I feel so bad I go out and buy
a \$100 worth of lottery tickets,
in faith I will be a winner soon.

DEATH AT THE DRIVE-IN

At the drive-in we have to sit
through a Charles Bronson movie
before we get to the movie we came for,
she hates it. I love it.
A total of twelve murders
only Bronson's anti-hero
and his punk girl-friend survive
just about everybody else
gets done in:
the mafia drug peddler,
the bad cop, the good cop,
the wife and her sleazy lover,
prostitutes and thugs,
the evil wicked woman,
and innocent bystanders.
Every time a murder takes place
the cars and trucks
honk their horns in appreciation.
This is an American art form
as essential as Kabuki
it mimics what we dream.
Blam, there's one for mom.
Pow, one for the old man.
Zing, here's one for Bro
and everyone else who's
given us hurt or a hard time.
Now plans are to tear down
the drive-in and build condos.
What'll people do on Saturday night?
Who will they honk for tomorrow?

-- Richard Dietmeier

Anaheim CA

CURMUDGEON-MAN

First of all, I don't save people.
A woman dangling from the Space Needle? Great --
you fly up there.